Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco in the ongoing auctions in Andhra Pradesh is ruling above the Minimum Support Price for the commodity.

(b) Does not arise.

Agreement in WTO

164. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a bid to reach an agreement on a negotiating framework for key issues like agriculture and non-agriculture, the World Trade Organisation General Council Chairman has urged members to work towards arriving at a shared understanding of the package as early as possible;

(b) if so, whether Govenrment have made any efforts with other countries to solve agriculture norms/non-agriculture issues in the WTO; and

(c) if so, to what extent it has succeeded and by when a final decision is likely to be taken by WTO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India has been coordinating regularly with the other Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) having similar interests and concerns on various issues in the on-going negotiations under the Doha Work Programme, including in agriculture. Thus India is part of developing country groupings like the G-20 (Agriculture) and G-16 (Singapore Issues). In respect of all these issues, including agriculture and non-agricultural products' market access, discussions are taking place in the various negotiating bodies constituted in WTO in order to come to an understanding on the 'framework' of negotiations. These efforts are aimed at achieving a balanced outcome, including special and differential treatment for developing countries to enable them to meet their developmental and trade concerns. The negotiations are formally scheduled to conclude by 1 January, 2005 in accordance with the mandate given by the WTO Ministers at Doha in November 2001. At this stage, since the negotiations are on-going, it is difficult to estimate the success or otherwise of India's efforts in these negotiations.

Revival of tea sector in West Bengal

165. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSRY be pleased to state: